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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER

MAY 1914

EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

The board of education of the city of Detroit has established a new office as part of the city equipment for the supervision of schools.

**Detroit's
Bureau of
School
Efficiency**

This office is to be filled by Mr. Courtis, who is known for his work in arithmetic and reading tests. Mr. Courtis has been doing his work in the Home and Day School of Detroit, a private school for girls. He has, however, carried out his arithmetic tests in Detroit and has made numerous suggestions for the improvement of the courses as administered in the Detroit schools. He now becomes a part of the superintendent's office and will aid in the educational supervision of the system, making regular examinations of the efficiency of the children and teachers in the schools.

This move on the part of the Detroit board of education is similar to the move which has already been made in the city of New Orleans, where a great deal of energy is being devoted to the study of school problems by scientific methods. There is a bureau for the study of efficiency in the Boston schools also. Evidently the movement to supplement the usual administrative machinery by scientific studies is well under way. If the school surveys which have been organized in recent years have performed no other service than to lead to the establishment of these permanent bureaus of efficiency at different centers, the movement has been effective and successful.

The officers of the National Education Association announce in a preliminary way the outlines of the programs for the various departments of the summer meeting. This meeting will be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, July 4-11. There will be six general sessions. The first will be given over to the addresses of greeting and response, the president's address, and one other. The second session will be devoted to a discussion of the status of women. "The Educational Advancement of Women" will be discussed by four women of distinction from different parts of the United States. The third session will be given up to the discussion of the final report of the Committee on Teachers' Salaries and Cost of Living. The fourth session will have as its topic "The Principles and Aims of Education," which will be discussed by four men, one speaking from the standpoint of elementary education, one from the standpoint of the college, one from the standpoint of the university, and one from a general standpoint. The subject of the fifth session will be "Education in a Democracy." The sixth session will be given over to a series of ten-minute speeches on "The Needs of the Public School." These speeches will be chiefly from the ex-presidents of the Association.

The detailed programs of several of the sessions which will be of the largest interest to elementary teachers and supervisors are as follows:

The Kindergarten Department will have as its topics for the first session, "The Readjustment of the Kindergarten and Primary Grades to Conform to the Same General Principles"; "A Kindergarten Program Based on Problems Rather Than on Prescribed Subject-Matter." In the second session, the general topic will be "The New Developments in Kindergarten Practice." The third session will be held jointly with the Departments of Special Education and Elementary Education.

The Department of Elementary Education will have for its general topic, "The Individual Child and His Individual Needs." The first session will be devoted to a discussion of "The School Life of the Child" and the second session to "The Home Life of the Child." The third session will be a joint meeting with the Kindergarten Department and the Department of Special Education, at which will be discussed, "The Possibilities of the Kindergarten to

Reveal the Classification and the Limitations of the Child for Doing Standardized Elementary-School Work." It is the purpose of this program to make the individual child the central thought of the department. Practical school people with a real live message will present the school viewpoint, while the home side will be given by those who are not directly connected with the schools, but who have the burdens of child-welfare on their hearts, and who have had much experience in social and child-welfare problems.

The Department of Physical Education will discuss, "Motor Efficiency" and "The Relation of Normal Schools to the Teaching of Hygiene and Physical Training in the Secondary Schools." The second session will be occupied with a symposium on the subject "Shall Sex Hygiene Be Taught in the Public Schools?"

The Department of Special Education will hold two separate meetings, and one joint meeting with the Department of Elementary Education and the Department of Kindergarten Education. The general topics to be discussed are: "The Handicapped but Potentially Normal Child"; "The Dependent and Delinquent Child"; "School Clinics and Medical Inspection"; "Special and Ungraded Classes in Schools for Different Types of Children"; "Methods of Testing and Classification."

The Department of Classroom Teachers, which will hold its first meeting at St. Paul, will provide an opportunity for such teachers to have a place within the Association for the discussion of educational and professional problems pertaining to them. The term "classroom teachers" includes the teachers of the entire twelve grades. The subject of the first session will be the report of the Committee on Teachers' Salaries and Cost of Living, and the second session will be given up to the question of industrial training. These discussions will be from the classroom standpoint.

Important school legislation was passed by a special session of the General Assembly of the state of Ohio. This legislation followed upon the survey which was made by Dr. **Ohio School** Brittain and those who were associated with him. **Legislation** The survey made in Ohio has the advantage over some of the earlier state surveys which have been made in that it covered a very large number of representative schools. When the legisla-

ture assembled it was accordingly adequately informed on the conditions existing throughout the state. Among the important items of legislation are the following:

The state funds are to be distributed on the basis of the number of teachers and the average daily attendance of pupils. There is a minimum salary for teachers. No person shall be employed to teach in any public school in Ohio for less than \$40 a month. If necessary, the state treasurer must contribute to the funds of a school district in order to meet this requirement. The school district is called upon to levy the maximum tax, if necessary, but is required either independently or with the help of the state to maintain school for eight months in the year. Agriculture is to be taught in all of the common schools of all villages and rural districts. There is to be a general standardization of village and rural schools so that pupils coming from these schools shall be admitted to the high schools without examination. The schools themselves are to be examined, however, with respect to their equipment, course of study, and supervision.

Ohio has been, in many respects, a backward state in its school organization. It has been governed in school matters by the local authorities. This is changed by the new legislation. The certification of teachers is given to a state board, and supervision is provided which virtually puts the schools on a county basis.

A wholesale program of reform promises some difficulties as the new machinery is first set in operation. On the other hand, a carefully digested and coherent scheme such as arises out of a general survey is the most promising solution of a complex situation. If reform is to be made, this is undoubtedly the way to make it both intelligent and comprehensive.

The following article from the *St. Paul* (Minnesota) *News* tells in brief and concrete way of the degree to which a practical endeavor of the St. Paul schools has been attended with success:

**Lessons in
Thrift**

St. Paul school children are learning the lesson of thrift. Figures have just been compiled showing the growth of the saving habit among the pupils chiefly of the St. Paul grade schools. The amount received up to March 1, 1914, was \$13,993.66. This only covers the period from November 6, 1913, when the system was first inaugurated. There

are now 49 schools participating in the savings plan, representing 56,754 deposits. Since the plan was inaugurated, the withdrawals have amounted to only \$3,887. 10. Certain days of the month are designated as "bank days," when pupils bring their earnings. There is intense rivalry between the various rooms to make their balances the largest.

Along with this, it is interesting to note that the newspaper printing this report advocates a "Thrift Day" for public schools.

They have "Emerson Days," "Stevenson Days," and all kinds of days which are observed by reading selections from the various authors whose work they commemorate; why not have a "Thrift Day" once in a while? The majority of students being turned out of the public schools are totally lacking in knowledge of finance, even that rudimentary part of it dealing with the importance of regular saving. It would shorten the road to success for most of them if "thrift" were taken from its obscurity and made a vital part of our educational system, as has already been done in some European countries.

E. M. H.

An article entitled "Latin in the Seventh and Eighth Grades in California," by H. C. Nutting, of the University of California, appears in the *Classical Weekly* of March 21. This article "attempts to form some estimate of the measure of success attending the new departure," the writer's conclusions being based upon the reports from a number of teachers directly connected with the work. The paper first reports a new grouping of classes whereby the seventh and eighth grades are cut off from the grammar school and are united with the ninth grade to form what are variously known as intermediate, introductory, or lower high schools. This movement was begun some four years ago in Palo Alto, Berkeley, and a few other cities of the state.

"While at the outset there were considerable difficulties to be faced, . . . the verdict at the present time is overwhelmingly in favor of the policy of beginning the study of Latin in the seventh grade, for those who are to study the subject."

The typical results of the experiment are shown by a test given to those students who began the study of Latin in the seventh grade and those who began the study in the ninth grade. This test consisted in having high-eighth-grade pupils who had had twenty

months of work in Latin and ninth-grade pupils who had had ten months' work translate Latin into English and English into Latin. "All eighth-graders passed the Latin-to-English test and all but one the English-to-Latin test. Of the ninth-graders, six failed in the first, while one-half of the class failed in the second test." In comparing the papers it was found that, from all viewpoints, the work of those who began the work in the seventh grade was far superior. After a discussion of some of the apparent reasons for this, the author says: "Viewing, in the large, the California experiment of introducing the study of Latin into the seventh grade, there is little room for doubt that the new departure is proving a conspicuous success."

E. M. H.

The following circular, issued by the Bureau of Education, contains so much general information and makes so vigorous a plea for the establishment of summer sessions in the public schools that it is reproduced in full:

**Lengthening
the
School
Year**

In the cities, towns, manufacturing villages, and unincorporated suburban communities of the United States there are approximately 13,000,000 children between the ages of six and twenty. Of these, more than 9,500,000 are enrolled in the public and private schools. The average daily attendance is about 6,500,000. These children are taught by more than 300,000 teachers, at an annual cost for all purposes of about \$300,000,000. The city schools are in session about 180 days in the year. The average daily session is 5 hours. Children who attend school regularly and without tardiness have 900 hours of schooling in the year. The average attendance of those enrolled is 120 days, or 600 hours. There are in the year 8,760 hours, 5,110 waking hours for children who sleep 10 hours a day. Children who attend school the full time are in the school a little less than one-third of the waking hours of 180 days and not in school at all 185 days. The average attendance is only about one-third of the waking hours of 120 days, with no attendance on 245 days. Children who attend all of the school hours of the year are in school 900 hours, and out of school 4,200 waking hours; the average is 600 hours in school and 4,510 waking hours out of the school.

Probably 5 per cent of the school children of the cities and towns and suburban communities go away during the summer to the country and summer resorts; 10 per cent or less have some useful occupation through the vacation months; and 85 per cent or more are at home without useful occupation. They spend the time in idleness on the streets and alleys without guidance, on vacant

lots, or swelter in crowded houses and on superheated streets. Much that was learned in school at previous sessions is forgotten; many of the children become criminals, and still more form habits of idleness.

The schools, which are established and maintained for the purpose of educating children into manhood and womanhood, of preparing them for society and citizenship, and of giving them such knowledge and training as will enable them to make an honest living, should provide some kind of instruction for the great mass of these children through what is now, in most cities, a long, wasteful vacation. I believe no one will claim that the addition of 400 or 500 hours to the number now spent in school would be a burden to any child. The addition of 3 school months of 5 hours a day would mean only 300 hours to the school year to children attending regularly and promptly, and only 200 hours to the average child on the basis of present attendance. This would give 1,200 hours for children attending the full time and 800 hours for the average child; of course much less than this for many.

Possibly the school day in the summer session should be not more than 4 hours; that is, from 7 or 8 o'clock to 11 or 12 o'clock in the forenoon. School work can be much better done during these hours in the summer than in the present school hours of the winter months. Attendance is easier and buildings do not need to be heated. Where such a program is organized it may be found necessary to change the school work so as to give more laboratory and shopwork during the summer sessions than in the winter and less of the ordinary bookwork. Children attending the summer session under these conditions would, no doubt, be much happier and healthier than they are turned loose, with nothing to do, on the streets and alleys. It is a mistake to suppose that children do not like to work. All children do like to work at whatever is of real benefit to them until they learn to be idle.

A number of careful studies made in different parts of the country and in schools of different kinds indicate that children really do not study in school more than an average of 3 hours a day, whatever may be the length of the daily session. For children in the primary grades the time is less; for the high-school grades, somewhat more. That includes not only the time which children give to their studies out of class, but the time in which they really attend to their work in class. This indicates the desirability of reorganizing school work in such way as to give 3 hours a day for intensive school work of the ordinary type, and to provide 4 or 5 hours of productive work suited to the capacity of the child, either at home, in shops under good conditions, in outdoor gardens, or in shops provided by the school. With this kind of an organization it would be very easy for children to work at ordinary school work 3 hours a day 6 days in the week, through 11 calendar months in the year, and at the same time contribute largely to their own support by well-directed, productive educational work, either at home or in the school, thus making it possible for the great majority of children to remain in school throughout the high-school period.

The cost of adding the 3 months of school would be comparatively little. There would be no cost for fuel, the cost of attendance would be less, and the additional cost for teachers would not be in proportion to the number of days added. Whatever may be the terms of the contract, teachers are in fact employed by the year. Comparatively few of them use the vacation months in any profitable way. An addition of an average of \$300 to the annual salary of the teachers would require a total of less than \$10,000,000, or about 3 per cent of the total annual cost of the schools.

For most teachers the additional months would not be a hardship, especially if the school days were shortened. Certainly this is true if teachers could be relieved of a large amount of unnecessary bookkeeping, report-making, and the reading of unnecessary examination papers, with which they are now burdened. It would cost very little more to employ teachers by the year, each teacher teaching three quarters, as is now done in many universities and colleges.

In the issue of *Science* for February 13, former Commissioner of Education E. E. Brown, now chancellor of New York University, gives a very interesting and illuminating account of his experiences when he was head of the Bureau of Education in Washington. He opens the article by telling how he was met on every side by the greatest hospitality when he first arrived in Washington. His hopes of accomplishing large things in the Bureau grew with these manifestations of hospitality. It was not until he came in contact with the Committee on Appropriations that he learned the real difficulties. He discovered in his contact with this committee the "intrenched tradition," as he calls it, "that the federal Congress should not go deeply into expenditures for public education." The opposition which he encountered in Congress made it almost impossible for him to accomplish even the ordinary work of the Bureau. By way of interesting comparison he gives an account of the growth in appropriations for the Department of Agriculture as compared with the very meager increases of appropriations for the Bureau of Education. The latter part of this interesting paper takes up the general problem of the establishment of a national university.

The paper should be read by all school people. It is perfectly clear from what Mr. Brown has said that the Bureau of Education ought to be enlarged and its operations ought to be freed from the

entanglements which at present hamper its work. The school people of the United States hardly realize that they have in the Bureau of Education a unique organization which is not paralleled anywhere in the world. Foreign nations are beginning to realize the significance of the large body of information collected by our bureau. A similar institution is just being established in Berlin and a faint imitation of the sort of thing that is done by our Bureau of Education is being undertaken by the English board. Our Bureau of Education, even with the handicaps under which it now suffers, is accomplishing much for the American educational system. But school people should not be satisfied with the relatively meager service that is rendered by the Bureau, handicapped as it is by lack of appropriations and bound up in an organization which renders it helpless. There ought to be a genuine movement in this country to enlarge the facilities which are provided by our central government for the great business of conducting schools and exhibiting their efficiency.

The Teachers' Council of New York City has made a careful investigation of the causes of delinquency and truancy in the schools and has rendered a report in which its findings are classified under five different heads. Children are delinquent and truant from school first of all because of defects in home control. There is a lack of knowledge or interest on the part of parents which reflects itself in the fact that children either are allowed to remain away from school or succeed in staying away without the knowledge on the part of their parents of the school's requirements.

The second group of causes of truancy arises from the acts of teachers or principals. The teacher's contributions to truancy are perhaps worth enumerating in full: (1) undue punishment for lateness; (2) fanciful requirements of certain teachers as to pupils' clothing, as white shirts, waists, etc.; (3) ill-arranged and fatiguing daily programs; (4) too close adherence to the letter of the law in scholastic requirements; (5) excessive or impossible (for the dull pupil) requirements as to home study or bringing in written work, etc. Principals are reported to show at times lack of interest in the

**New York
Studies of
Truancy**

problem of truancy. They fail to follow up absence and they sometimes inflict unjust punishment for absence or for other causes and thus drive the timid or obstinate pupil away from school.

A third group of causes arises from the treatment given by the courts to cases brought before them. In general, it is pointed out that the courts do not treat the truancy laws seriously and are very lenient in administering them. They mishandle cases of children and do not give support to the regular officers whose business it is to promote regularity of school attendance.

A fourth group of causes is described as the street causes. In the first place, there are a great many distracting agencies on the street which furnish incidental employment to school children or offer them opportunities for gaining amusement. The junkmen and second-hand dealers induce boys to steal material or collect various sorts of waste material which has a small money value. Moving-picture shows and small candy and tobacco stores welcome truant children. Policemen are said to be indifferent to the presence on their beats during school hours of children from neighboring schools; and, finally, the agencies that should follow up children between fourteen and sixteen are said to be deficient in seeing that the labor certificates are returned to the superintendent if the child is not properly employed.

Finally, under a fifth heading are brought together numerous administrative causes for truancy. A superintendent whose office is fully occupied with the routine of educational supervision cannot furnish the energy necessary to enforce the attendance laws. If assistant superintendents and others in the different districts are called upon to do this work, the central administration finds itself embarrassed by a lack of proper education supervision and is very likely to forego the rigid enforcement of a compulsory act in favor of these more essential types of supervision.

The remedy for these difficulties seems to be more adequate machinery for the execution of the law. In this connection a circular recently sent out by the Bureau of Education of the United States is of interest because of the general summary which it presents of the requirements in different states of the Union and the specific recommendations which it makes for improving conditions.